

**White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation  
Day 2 Breakout Session Compilation**

**Topic:** Managing Diverse Resource Demands on America's Public Lands: A Cooperative Approach to Improving Conservation

**Session number:** 40

**Morning**

**Facilitator:** Ed Moreno

**Location:** 240

**A. Major Repeated Themes Raised in the Discussion.** A grouping of ideas repeated with some frequency in the session and brought up again during the group summation process. Also includes diverging views and/or questions about the topic.

There is practical value in collaborative work. Now it's highly recognized. It takes time, energy and commitment.

Key ingredients to a successful collaboration are a shared vision of success and committed idea of success and common goals. Have a focus on core values.

Collaboration takes time and energy. Participants should invest time and energy needed to build trust. Includes listening, having open mind, respecting different points of view, humility, and willingness to compromise.

A collaborative process must have all of the necessary participants at the table. It should be fully inclusive. To achieve collaboration local knowledge needs to be included in the process.

There is a sense of urgency that collaboration needs to be happening now.

Inclusiveness is critical. You will end up with better product.

Recognizing need for continuing federal investment. Funding, personnel, and actual projects. Be open to alternative sources of funding.

**B. National-level Practical Actions** *that could be taken by the Federal government, national NGO's, and other national organizations. Diverging views and/or questions are also noted.*

Training for employees and empowering them to be flexible in the field.

Devise a system to reward employees and agencies for conducting collaborative efforts, for example building into the performance standards and the position description.

The federal government should continue reaching out and talking agency staff and local interests on the local level. Keep the dialogue going.

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Encourage the federal agencies to collaborate between themselves as well.

Recognize that agency headquarters have an interest in consistent application of policy and regulations, sometimes there is a disconnect.

Agencies are directed to conduct collaboration but there is no funding or performance measures associated.

Expand stewardship contracting.

Build collaboration into regulatory process.

Ask feds to see how funds are being distributed. There may be enough funds but more dollars should reach the collaborative project. ground and fund the folks who are doing collaboration.

- C. **Local-level Practical Actions** *that could be taken at the local or community level by Tribes, state and local communities, private citizens, and local organizations. Diverging views and/or questions are also noted.*

Ask locals to work with agencies and identify how the feds can help a local situation by understanding what the federal role and authority is. Do your homework first.

Most successes are generated and succeed at local level. This is where cooperation begins and continues.

- D. **Particularly insightful quotes from participants** that capture the essence of key points made during the group's discussion.

"We don't know where the money is going to come from, but ...we can do it."

"Limitations are a mindset. Give me a limitation and I'll turn it into an asset."

"I would like to be trusted to take care of the resource without having to follow every single rule," a rancher, on what he wants the agency mindset to be.

"You have to give some part of yourself. You have to drop your defenses, your anger, you may even have to give up personal property. Everybody has to give up something," on how to reach compromise.

"Include all interested parties, and then never end," on keeping interested parties engaged.

"Build personal relationships before you discuss the issues. If negotiations break down, go back to rebuild relationships."

"Why is it an officer instead of an educator. Instead of policing, educate."

"Success builds motivation, motivation builds success."

"Drink beer with folks you normally don't drink beer with."

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**Morning**

**Facilitator:** Mary Margaret Golten

**Location:** 274

**A. Major Repeated Themes Raised in the Discussion.** *A grouping of ideas repeated with some frequency in the session and brought up again during the group summation process. Also includes diverging views and/or questions about the topic.*

- Build relationships/trust from the bottom up and respect local knowledge and focus on getting buy-in from the local level (respect the community).
- Clarify ground rules, assumptions, roles, and goals.
- Build a whole framework of incentives for people to collaborate.
- Encourage and incentivize risk taking
- Appropriate funding is often lacking for planning and monitoring.
- Need for political will.
- Sometimes there is inaccurate/conflicting data in science.
- Low income limited resource communities often cannot participate equally.
- Decision-makers and others who have been part of a decision making process move in and out of the process.

**B. National-level Practical Actions** *that could be taken by the Federal government, national NGO's, and other national organizations. Diverging views and/or questions are also noted.*

- Review existing body of all regulation of all federal agencies to enhance and streamline cooperative approach.
- Need incentives for agencies to think "outside the box" to implement cooperative conservation.
- Need cooperative approach to science- research efforts/projects- together (state, local federal).
- Provide incentives for early discussions and preventative measures before deadlocks.
- Prioritize budget decisions on where collaboration occurs.

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C. **Local-level Practical Actions** *that could be taken at the local or community level by Tribes, state and local communities, private citizens, and local organizations. Diverging views and/or questions are also noted.*

- Build capacity (skills and abilities) at local level to collaborate.
- Designate single agency point of coordination in collaborative efforts (local/national levels).
- Institute performance measures and accountability rewards for collaboration (local/national levels).
- Create a “safe harbor” process for collaborative land use management.
- Design a new policy for analysis at the ecosystem level rather than at a single species level regarding ESA.

D. **Particularly insightful quotes from participants** that capture the essence of key points made during the group’s discussion.

- It is important that the “right people are at the table” in a decision making process to be constructive.
- **“the Monkey Wrench”**: those whose purpose is to destroy/distract the process
- We may have a great idea for a project, but there is no money for planning and monitoring, especially for projects in which there are more long term benefits than short-term
- Working in a rural setting: and “sitting at kitchen tables” and drinking “bad coffee”.
- Starting a conversation in the field. Actually talking about what the on the ground conditions are. In the woods, on the ranch, in the stream...wherever the discussion is involving. “What do you see here?”
- It is important to check your weapon at the **door (from a lawyer)**

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**Session number:** 40

**Facilitator:** Don Charpio

**Morning**

**Location:** 275

**A. Major Repeated Themes Raised in the Discussion.** *A grouping of ideas repeated with some frequency in the session and brought up again during the group summation process. Also includes diverging views and/or questions about the topic.*

- Process – Participants must have confidence in the process if they are going to be committed to the results. Decisions must be final and conclusive. Transparency is important. We must have accurate information on which to base decisions.
- Information – Participants must also have confidence in the partnerships they develop. The partners must be transparent and honest about their agenda and interests. Additionally, each partner should be educated as to the goals and interests of those with whom they work. This will foster understanding and trust. Respect for partners is crucial.
- Leadership – Vision must drive the process. Strong leadership is necessary for successful collaboration.
- Administrative Concerns – Participants voiced concern over funding issues and resource allocation, including employees' abilities to participate. The lack of finality in the process is detrimental to resource allocation decisions. Further, all stakeholders must be included to create a truly collaborative process.
- Streamline and Coordinate Regulations – Further discussed under National-level Practical Actions.

**B. National-level Practical Actions** *that could be taken by the Federal government, national NGO's, and other national organizations. Diverging views and/or questions are also noted.*

- Fully fund agencies.
- Provide flexibility to the agencies so that they can work together more easily. Streamline regulations that apply and try to make them consistent between agencies.
- Organizations at the national level have a responsibility to educate their members.
- Utilize a more open process with a level playing field.
- Educate our members about the value of the cooperative process and about the rules and regulations with which they are concerned. Organizations and NGOs need to be vocal about issues with Congress and help agencies be successful

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- Get out of the box and engage folks and come up with a process that is different than it is now and explore ways that might get us to a different means to results. Reinvent the process to engage everybody.
- NEPA needs to be streamlined/amended/repealed.
- FACA needs to be repealed/amended, but keep the intent of open meetings.
- This whole conference has emphasized the key role of President Roosevelt. If this administration was serious about this they would focus on this over and over. Roosevelt was consistent in his advocacy.

**C. Local-level Practical Actions** *that could be taken at the local or community level by Tribes, state and local communities, private citizens, and local organizations. Diverging views and/or questions are also noted.*

- Key partners on the local level must be visible and be in touch with others who are involved. They must be able to take concerns straight to the correct folks.
- At the local level we need to encourage regional action. Alpine example is good.
- Demand that land grant universities are engaged.
- Local level must be involved in conservation education. Folks aren't getting enough education on the subject.
- Serve as a conduit from landowners to state agencies and other government organizations.
- Local governments can take more of an interest in federal lands. Work to get the right people at these meetings.
- Disseminate information to their constituents.
- Must learn conservation, it isn't inherited. Kids at an early age must learn what conservation is and how to collaborate.
- Need to engage lots or organized groups.

**D. Particularly insightful quotes from participants** *that capture the essence of key points made during the group's discussion.*

- "Fear of change and fear of things they don't understand brings to the table folks who are defensive."
- "Federal agencies have individual cultures and missions. Often times those competing missions/mandates/cultures are a real barrier to cooperation. Sometimes we have expectations that are unrealistic in this area."
- "Empower the process."

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**Morning**

**Facilitator:** Matthew McKinney

**Location:** 276

**A. Major Repeated Themes Raised in the Discussion.** *A grouping of ideas repeated with some frequency in the session and brought up again during the group summation process. Also includes diverging views and/or questions about the topic.*

### Key Ingredients & Best Practices

- Information – “good data and good maps,” scientific baseline for decisions and data on economic and social impacts of decisions is especially important. Best if generated jointly by all stakeholders – joint fact finding.
- Representation – All key stakeholders need to be at the table with a meaningful role and need to understand everyone's interests, responsibilities, and decision constraints and mission requirements. Enable communication and build trust.
- Integrate informal community networks with formal planning processes – Agencies need to develop relationships with local people and get personally involved with the local community. Laws themselves not necessarily broken, just the way they're implemented.
- Timing and timeline - Process needs to begin early and involve stakeholders proactively before problems arise. Short-term administrative deadlines need to be adjusted to the longer-term realities of collaboration.
- Education – Teaching local decision makers and stakeholders about the planning process and how they can get involved.

### Barriers & Obstacles

- Competing time demands for participants who wear many hats
- Litigation – everything people do has to be made bullet-proof, (instead of actually solving problem)
- FACA obstacle preventing ordinary people from gathering together to solve the problem
- How to get top-down agencies to encourage risk-taking, mentoring staff to change practices – a support network

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- Lack of a locally-shared vision and a common base of knowledge (scientific and otherwise)
- Someone litigating and blowing apart consensus after it's developed – chills the whole process
- Lack of clear understanding of planning processes and common baseline of knowledge (enviro, social, economic, everything)
- Lack of understanding about the need for a long-term planning horizon – beyond just a few years
- Traditional formal processes are often ineffective yet locked in – a Bureaucratic box of regs with rigid terms – precludes new approaches
- Lack of understanding of purposes, mandates, purpose of various public lands
- Not enough people are staying engaged in process – not enough fuel to carry on, especially for implementation and monitoring
- Temptation to speed up, complete process, but there is risk of inadequate info or relationships
- Institutional structure - how contracts are selected, no \$ for facilitator. Typical planning process out of step with needs of cooperative conservation.
- Lack of neutral facilitator in really controversial decisions
- Not developing an adequate science knowledge baseline to make informed decisions. Not enough \$, time, commitment by partners. And ongoing monitoring – first thing cut by agencies.

**B. National-level Practical Actions** *that could be taken by the Federal government, national NGO's, and other national organizations. Diverging views and/or questions are also noted.*

#### National-level

- Change NEPA legislation to incorporate community decision-making networks
- Research recreational impacts and update policy
- Special planning guidance on how to do Coop Cons
- “shelters of innovation” – Mresources avail for projects to take risks and take the next step.
- Divergent view - Give all FS land to the BLM in AZ
- Need a vision of what a good process actually is – what exactly is it?  
Congressional Blue Ribbon panel for pilot projects to develop standards
- Agency leaders need to mix it up with the public more – town hall meetings
- Better strategic planning to transcend politics, work toward long-term shared conservation vision
- More coordination among agencies.

**C. Local-level Practical Actions** *that could be taken at the local or community level by Tribes, state and local communities, private citizens, and local organizations. Diverging views and/or questions are also noted.*

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- Find best examples – case studies. Raise the platform of understanding locally – training for local staff and stakeholders - opens up opportunity for community to be involved, have them identify problems and objectives. Cooperation and education among agencies and state, city, county officials. Leverage interests and resources, share info and expertise.
- Share data and contact lists.
- Pragmatic and personal contact between USFS and adjacent landowners – “look over the fence”
- “Loosening the reins on local managers, allow them to be more creative and communicative”
- Allow decisions to be made by local managers.
- Agencies need to provide incentives for staff to get involved in communities.
- “This is a people issue.” Empower a champion (probably an agency person) at the local level to drive the process
- Remember customs and culture of the area, define it and keep it part of official planning documents
- Incentives to keep staff local, remove barriers that prevent them from participating in community activities

**D. Particularly insightful quotes from participants** that capture the essence of key points made during the group’s discussion.

“It’s all about people”

“Forest Service staff need to want to talk to people and not to the trees.”

“Our screw ups are not with NEPA analyses but with flesh and blood relationships – the human element – before it ever gets to a NEPA analysis”

“Build relationships TO deal with difficult issues, not build relationships OUT OF dealing with difficult issues.”

“You get more with honey than you do with money”

“agencies don’t embrace adaptive management or outcome-based decisions. System is hide-bound as all get-out, no rewards for agencies to take risks.”

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